

My name is Jacqueline Johnson and I am a voter from West Hartford. Just before COVID, I had the privilege of volunteering at voter registration drives at the Hartford Public Library and several other locations. I had planned to continue until being sidelined by unexpected closings. The profound conversations I had with a brand new citizen and a couple of parolees helped me to fully appreciate the importance of **passing both HB 6578 (Automatic Voter Registration and Restoring Parolee Voting Rights) and SB 1017 (Permanent Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes).**

Passing SB 1017 is vital in ensuring that voters currently qualifying to vote absentee **retain the freedom they had in 2020 to use their town's official, secure ballot drop boxes.** Early voting is also a much needed to securely grow the franchise.

Expanding Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) beyond the Dept. of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to other state agencies is a common-sense reform that saves taxpayer money, automatically updates voter rolls and helps increase democratic participation. 77% of Connecticut voters support Automatic Voter Registration. **This bill is a good start but please improve it to expand AVR beyond the DMV.**

Restoring the right to vote to people re-entering their communities on parole is also extremely important to me because **disenfranchising people on parole sustains a racist system of inequality in our state.** Those on parole are concentrated in only a handful of Connecticut communities—those with significant populations of Black and Latino people.

The choice is clear, **please choose democracy** and pass HB 6578 with the needed improvement and pass SB 1017.

Thank you!

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